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touched upon the subject of literary craftsmanship—"As for myself—though you could hardly call me a real, sure enough author—I never have anything but the vaguest ideas of what I am going to write; but when I take my pen in hand, the rust clears away, and the 'other fellow' takes charge. . . . I have often asked my 'other fellow' where he gets all his information, and how he can remember, in the nick of time, things that I have forgotten long ago; but he never satisfies my curiosity. He is simply a spectator of my folly until I seize a pen, and then he comes forward and takes charge."

Yet Harris would never have admitted that he was a genius.

Nothing is more annoying to a constitutionally shy man than to be constantly assured by well-meaning friends that he has no occasion for shyness. The shy man, if he were not shy, might call his friend a liar, and might perhaps be justified. Is not a shy man one who knows his own weaknesses, and a bold man one who does not? It seems no more than just to Harris to acknowledge that he was in some ways a bit commonplace, that he had reason for feeling somewhat acutely the contrast between his usual self and the other fellow, reason for feeling a bit out of place on some occasions and in some companies. Who would surrender a bit of this commonplaceness that kept Harris so thoroughly human? It is as precious as his genius, for it makes him one of us—not in form and manners, but in frank commonness.

The biography shows us a shy democratic man; a faithful, lovable, mirth-loving man, with a good deal of the small boy about him; a brilliant journalist of the old-fashioned type—wit a little forced sometimes, sentiment a little too pretty, but sound and bright, and much superior to the ordinary; a companionable, affording man among a group of his friends, not too critical of his own witticisms and sometimes gloriously funny. It shows us, in short a splendid and favorable example of what is except for extreme sensitiveness, an American type. This, rather than a genius—though the genius flashes out now and then in the man's superior thought, energy, or kindness.

Hillaire Belloc remarks profoundly that democracy—the doctrine that men are born equal—is essentially a mystical belief. The life of a man like Harris lets us into the secret of this belief through the literary doorway. He, more than authors who have preached Americanism and simplicity in a more brilliant way, makes us feel that the gifted man of letters is of the same clay with ourselves and that he does not, or should not wish to be of any other clay. He is one of us, and we despite our want of genius are at one with him.

JOAN AND PETER. By H. G. Wells. New York: the Macmillan Company.

H. G. Wells's new novel, *Joan and Peter*, is not so good a novel as *Mr. Britling Sees it Through* or *The Research Magnificent*, but it is a very wonderful novel, notwithstanding—such a novel as no one but Wells could or would write.

As a story, *Joan and Peter* has the human "grip" which Mr. Wells in his seemingly negligent manner never fails to give to his

tales, despite the fact that he separates his chapters into numbered sections, after the fashion of Archbishop Whately in his *Rhetoric*, and that he scorns to depend overmuch upon plot or situation. *Joan and Peter* is crammed full of characters frankly lovable, deliciously hateful, or charmingly atrocious. In character-drawing, Wells has the touch of a caricaturist—not a crude exaggerator, but a caricaturist with genius. There is glee in his characterizations—and much truth. His is the method of an artist who perceives acutely and renders readily salient human traits, but who is above all anxious to make his ideas shine through.

In *Joan and Peter* there is, needless to say, an abundance of ideas. No novel of Wells's is more rewarding in its variety of comment upon life. But the story lacks the unity of *Tono-Bungay* or *The Research Magnificent*, in both of which all the ideas are brought to a burning focus, and it is also without the unity possessed by *Mr. Brilling*, which is a marvelously coherent record of spiritual development in the shadow of the great war.

What Mr. Wells has to say, in this novel, about English education is very pointed and very pertinent; but it somehow falls short of being really illuminating. The scholastic fatuities and abuses which Wells here satirizes seem, from an American point of view at least, somewhat old-fashioned, or faddish. A broadly scientific education, unhampered by the traditional standards of the universities, is what Mr. Wells seems to want. In America we have something like this, and yet. . . .

What Mr. Wells has to say about sex in this novel seems more than usually irrelevant. The author yields once again to his fondness for showing how the sexual instinct manifests itself in children; he takes Joan and Peter through adolescence and youth with even a superfluity of adventure. And all this comes just to the border-line of tediousness—though frank talk about sex is good, and though Mr. Wells's realism here as elsewhere is not simply truthful, but is also critical and challenging.

The conclusion of the whole matter, as Mr. Wells sees it, is big and definite. But it seems a rather general conclusion to result from a minute examination of the defects of the English school system and a close analysis of the love experiences of two young people.

Mr. Wells needs for the expression of his ideas in this novel three spokesmen.

The first spokesman is Oswald. Oswald was in love with Dolly, but Dolly preferred Arthur and married him. Their son was Peter, whose foster-sister Joan was really his cousin, though she was supposed to be his half-sister. Arthur, in a somewhat listless, characterless, late-Victorian way, was unfaithful to his wife—out of deference to free thought, mainly. Dolly was disgusted, but she stuck to Arthur and sent Oswald away. Oswald went to Africa, where he took part in a genuine work of civilization and gained a new conception of the mission of the British Empire. When he came back to England, Dolly and Arthur were both dead, and Oswald found himself charged with the guardianship of Peter and Joan.

Oswald had two passions—a passion for right education, and a passion for the right sort of empire-building. These two passions

blended into one. His attempts to convert others to his own views concerning the nature of civilization, and his persistent efforts to find the right schools for Peter and Joan are at once funny and pathetic. They are more: they arouse a certain indignation.

The second protagonist is Peter. Peter by the time he had finished his schooling had outgrown the ideas that had satisfied Oswald. Oswald had taken refuge in the conception of science and in his own conceptions of civilization. Facts are clean, he told himself, and the betterment of man's estate is a thing that appeals to one as dissipation and routine cannot. But Peter was a bit more divinely discontented than his mentor—he saw further than Oswald into the general purposelessness of things. He was disillusioned somewhat too thoroughly, and he was in imminent danger of wasting his life. Oswald could not hold him. Neither could Joan, who was in love with him.

The third and best spokesman whom Mr. Wells employs is no other than the Lord God.

Peter went to the war as an airman. He was wounded, and in his delirium he had a remarkable dream. He dreamed that he was seeking for the Lord God through endless corridors in a building filled with official persons, none of whom could tell him the way to the head office. "It was like the War Office, only more so." He found God at last in the dingiest untidiest little office it is possible to imagine. "And the Lord God of Heaven and Earth had the likeness of a lean, tired, intelligent-looking, oldish man, with an air of futile friendliness masking a fundamental indifference."

It is not permissible to spoil an extraordinary piece of writing by paraphrasing it. Peter's interview with the Lord God is a work of genius. Without eloquence, but with subtle and far-reaching irony, it expresses his underlying conception of a deity who expects man's coöperation.

THE FUTURE OF GERMAN INDUSTRIAL EXPORTS. By S. Herzog. Translated from the original German by M. L. Turrentine. Garden City: Doubleday, Page & Company.

The chief thing to be said about the book, *The Future of German Industrial Exports*, is that every American ought to read it. No war book is more important or more timely than this.

The book, now translated into English for American readers, is the work of an eminent German engineer and economist. It was published in Germany in 1915. It was not intended for any but German readers.

Here you may find, set forth with smug complacency, with an irritating assumption of God-given authority, and with tedious, conscientious—or rather, conscienceless—thoroughness, a well-developed scheme for putting all the other nations of the earth under Germany's commercial thumb.

Germany, the author blandly admits, has incurred the hatred of the world, and this hatred is a commercial liability. But all commerce is war, and the world even in time of peace is a battlefield. Germany can win in the struggle because she will be able to produce